Indians missing in Iraq

2146. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that five Indians including two persons from Punjab and three persons from Kerala engaged in transportation business of Kuwait's Gulf and Link Company are missing in Iraq; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to secure their whereabout?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No. Five Indians, two from Punjab and three from Tamil Nadu, working in the Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company as Truck Drivers, have reportedly been detained by Iraqi authorities in Basra.

(b) The Indian Embassy in Kuwait has requested their employer to make all efforts for their expeditious release. The Indian Embassy in Baghdad has also taken up the matter with the Iraqi Government and an Embassy official has met the detainees.

Involvement in human trafficking

2147. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that many senior officers of MEA are alleged to be involved in the Bhangra Troupe empanelment charged with human trafficking;

(b) if so, apart from the limited CBI enquiry being made in a specific case, whether any other similar cases are also being examined so as to *prima-facie* establish any such links with officers either based in Delhi or in our diplomatic mission;

(c) whether a time-bound enquiry is being thought of as CBI investigations may be a long drawn affairs; and

(d) whether any steps have been taken to ensure that such a situation is not allowed to be developed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) The Central Bureau of Investigation is investigating an alleged case of human trafficking through

empanelment of a Bhangra Troupe by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The case allegedly involves Shri Rakesh Kumar, former Director General, ICCR, Ms. Kehkeshan Tyagi, Programme Officer, ICCR and others.

(b) The Government is not aware of any other similar case in existence or under investigation, either in Delhi or in any Indian diplomatic Mission abroad.

(c) The CBI investigations that commenced in March, 2006 are continuing. Therefore, no other enquiry is being thought of until the outcome of ongoing investigations are submitted for Government's consideration.

(d) Procedures for empanelment of cultural troupes to be sent abroad have been streamlined to ensure greater objectivity and transparency.

Protest of China for Indo-US nuclear agreement

2148. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has registered its protest on civilian nuclear agreement Government had with America;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) The Chinese spokesman reacting to the signing of the Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement during President Bush's visit to India on March 2, 2006, said "China has a clear-cut position on the nuclear cooperation between India and the US. At present, the international non-proliferation community is working on enhancing the authority and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime. China hopes that the cooperation of relevant countries can contribute to these efforts, conforms to the regulations of the international non-proliferation regime and their own international obligations". He also added "As a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, China hopes that non-signatory countries can get on board as non-nuclear States at an early date, and contribute to a stronger international non-